

Texas Veterans Voice

A PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS VETERANS LAND BOARD ☆ JERRY PATTERSON, CHAIRMAN

FALL 2011
texasveterans.com



GENERAL INFORMATION

1.800.252.VETS (8387)
512.463.5060

VETERANS HOMES

Ussery-Roan

Amarillo, Texas
806.322.VETS (8387)

Lamun-Lusk-Sanchez

Big Spring, Texas
432.268.VETS (8387)

Clyde W. Cosper

Bonham, Texas
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Floresville, Texas
830.216.9456

Alfredo Gonzalez

McAllen, Texas
956.682.4224

William R. Courtney

Temple, Texas
254.791.8280

Watkins-Logan-Garrison

Tyler, Texas
Opening November 2011

VETERANS CEMETERIES

Central Texas

State Veterans Cemetery
Killeen, Texas
254.616.1770

Rio Grande Valley

State Veterans Cemetery
Mission, Texas
956.583.7227

Texas State Veterans Cemetery

at Abilene
Abilene, Texas
325.673.4446

Coastal Bend

State Veterans Cemetery
Opening early 2012

Watkins-Logan-Garrison Texas State Veterans Home Set to Open November 9

While the date is rapidly nearing for dedication of the Watkins-Logan-Garrison Texas State Veterans Home in Tyler, there's still time to reserve a place in this one-of-a-kind, long-term care facility.

Unlike previous Texas State Veterans Homes, this one will serve as a community with 10 cottages and one common building. This design approach draws residents into social connection by mixing the best communal aspects of a home while still maintaining privacy and independence for residents.

An open kitchen, dining room and large table are at the heart of each of the 10 cottages. Family-style meals will be served at the table and residents can enjoy each other's company afterward in a large living room with a fireplace. This hearth, or communal heart of the home, is what sets this Texas State Veterans Home apart from any other long-term care facility in Texas.

"The kitchen is the heart of any home, and the new Texas State Veterans Home we're opening in Smith County takes that into account," said Jerry Patterson, Chairman of the Veterans Land Board. "Instead of a large, hospital-like facility, this home has a cluster of small cottages built to draw residents into family-like



One of the cottages at the new state veterans home in Tyler.

social connections around the dinner table."

A total of 10 private rooms, each with its own bathroom, will flank the hearth. Each cottage will be set up as a "non-lift" facility, where overhead tracks with slings in each resident's room will provide safe transport of non-ambulatory residents from bed to bath.

This new home honors three local heroes—two Medal of Honor recipients and a Tuskegee airman—in naming it after Travis Earl Watkins, James Marion Logan and Samuel M. Garrison.

"When it came down to it, we just couldn't pick any one of these heroes over the other, so we picked all three," Patterson said. "We

were all just humbled by their sacrifice."

Watkins, a master sergeant, served in the
Tyler State Veterans Home Set to Open, Page 3

Please Join Us

for the
DEDICATION CEREMONY
of the

WATKINS-LOGAN-GARRISON
TEXAS STATE VETERANS HOME



NOVEMBER 9, 2011
10:30 A.M.



11466 HONOR LANE
TYLER, TEXAS 75708

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A Message from the Chairman

BY VETERANS LAND BOARD CHAIRMAN JERRY PATTERSON



Fellow Veterans:

Welcome to the fall edition of *Veterans Voice*, the newsletter of the Texas Veterans Land Board. A number of big events are on the horizon for the VLB, including the dedication ceremony of the Watkins-Logan-Garrison Texas State Veterans Home in Tyler, which is scheduled for November 9.

The Tyler home is a radically different facility that will offer a home-like setting for its residents. It will be the eighth Texas State Veterans Home built in Texas since I authored the legislation creating the program in 1997.

Another dedication ceremony is scheduled for the Coastal

Bend State Veterans Cemetery on December 7, Pearl Harbor Day. This superb facility in Nueces County will serve 53,000 veterans and their families who live in the area.

This will be the fourth Texas State Veterans Cemetery to open since I became Chairman of the VLB. Texas State Veterans Cemeteries already exist in Killeen, Mission and Abilene. All VA burial benefits are available to Texans interred at our state veterans cemeteries.

State veterans homes and state veterans cemeteries are a wonderful way to thank those who've served our nation, and I am honored to have helped in their creation.

I hope you enjoy the fall edition of *Veterans Voice*. For more information about VLB veterans homes and cemeteries, please call our toll-free veterans hotline at 1.800.252.VETS (8387), or visit our website at www.texasveterans.com.



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VLB Touts Programs to Realtors

The VLB reached out to real estate professionals from across the state at the Texas Association of Realtors (TAR) annual convention and trade expo in Austin last month.

A key component of the VLB's marketing efforts is to work with Texas real estate professionals and home builders to increase awareness of the VLB's loan programs. TAR generously donated booth space for the

VLB at this year's trade expo. Realtors can earn continuing education credits by completing one of three workshops that cover how the VLB's loan programs work. The courses are approved by the Texas Real Estate Commission. By training Realtors in how the VLB's loan programs work, more veterans can learn about these valuable benefits. ☆

Veterans Voice Update

In an effort to update veterans and their families with VLB information more quickly and efficiently, *Veterans Voice* is upgrading its coverage of veterans news. So starting in January, instead of *Veterans Voice* being a bi-annual publication coming out every spring and fall, we're moving it to a quarterly update you'll receive every three months in your email in-box.

Unfortunately, with continued increases in printing and mailing costs, plus the additional publication dates, the VLB will no longer be able to print and physically mail out this publication to the 315,000 or so veterans and active duty military members who subscribe to *Veterans Voice*.

Send us your email and contact info so you can make sure you continue to receive *Veterans Voice*. Sign up at <https://s3.glo.texas.gov/veteran-registration/index.cfm>. You can also find information about VLB programs, mailing lists and events on our Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/TXVLB>. ☆

October Forfeited Land Sale

The Texas Veterans Land Board will conduct a sealed-bid sale of **53 forfeited tracts** of state land at **9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, October 25, 2011.**



No bids will be accepted after 4:30 p.m. on Monday, October 24, 2011.



Only eligible military veterans may participate.

All forfeited tracts are listed on our VLB website at www.texasveterans.com. For complete information email us at vlbinfo@glo.texas.gov or call **1-800-252-VETS**.

Tracts may be withdrawn by the Board at any time for any reason.

Tyler State Veterans Home Set to Open November 9

Continued from Page 1

U.S. Army, Company H, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions near Yongsan, Korea in 1950. He was awarded the Bronze Star during World War II for action during the Guadalcanal campaign. His home of record and place of burial is Gladewater, Texas.

Logan, a technical sergeant, served in the U.S. Army, 36th Infantry Division. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions on September 9, 1943 in the vicinity of Salerno, Italy. In addition to receiving the Distinguished Service Cross he was the first living recipient to receive the Texas Medal of Honor. Logan lived in Kilgore prior to his death in 1999 and is buried at the Texas State Cemetery in Austin.

Garrison, a captain, received his training at Tuskegee Army Airfield in Tuskegee, Alabama and served in the first all-black Air Corp Fighter Squadron, Air Force Unit 99th Pursuit Squadron. Garrison earned two Silver Stars and two Bronze Stars. He lived in Tyler until his death in May 2011.

The newest Texas State Veterans Home is being built on 20 acres donated by the University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler. The donated land is just north of the Health Science Center, along the west side of Highway 155, just south of County Road 334. A \$12 million grant from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is

paying for 65 percent of construction costs, with the remaining 35 percent paid for by the Texas Veterans Land Board. The new Texas State Veterans Home will join seven others across the state in Amarillo, Big Spring, Bonham, El Paso, Floresville, McAllen and Temple.

Texas State Veterans Homes offer a broad spectrum of health care services, comprehensive rehabilitation programs, special diets, recreational activities, social services, libraries, and certified, secured Alzheimer's units, each with its own secured outdoor courtyard.

For additional information on Texas State Veterans Homes, please call 1.800.252.VETS (8387) or visit the Texas Veterans Land Board website at www.texasveterans.com. You can also find us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/TXVLB>. ☆



The kitchen in one of the cottages.

Iraq and Afghanistan Heroes to Attend Armed Forces Bowl

Excitement is building for the 2011 Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl, and for the fifth consecutive year the Texas VLB will organize and assist in bringing wounded warriors to the bowl game. Last year, more than 80 Wounded Warriors saw Army defeat SMU thanks to an airlift organized by the VLB. This is the sixth year the VLB has been a sponsor of the game.

"The VLB is honored to be able to make this a great day for these soldiers and Marines," said Jerry Patterson, Chairman of

the Veterans Land Board.

The airlift will fly Marines from Camp Lejeune's Wounded Warrior Battalion East and Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio. The airlift and ground transportation are paid for by private donations.

"The VLB has been an integral partner with the bowl and we are grateful for their support of the game and our Wounded Warriors," said Brant Ringler, ESPN executive director, Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl.

The ninth annual postseason collegiate football game will be played Friday, December 30 with an 11 a.m. kickoff at Gerald J. Ford Stadium on the campus of SMU. The game will be broadcast on ESPN beginning at 11 a.m. The 2011 Bell Helicopter Armed Forces Bowl will feature BYU, if bowl eligible, and a school from Conference USA.

Tickets to this year's game are available at www.armedforcesbowl.com. Active duty military members can attend free and veterans receive a discount. ☆

Maximizing Your Veterans Home Loan Benefits

Thousands of veterans across Texas have taken advantage of the VLB's below-market interest rates for buying a home.

All applicants for VLB home loans must qualify for a conventional, VA or FHA loan from a participating lender. Those veterans who qualify for a VA-guaranteed loan can take advantage of the VLB's low interest rates with no money down. For information on VA qualifying, visit <http://www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/eligibility.asp>.

For veterans who haven't owned a home for the past three years and meet certain income requirements, the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) has a First-Time Homebuyer Program that offers down payment and closing cost assistance of 4 percent of the mortgage amount as a second lien, 30-year, interest-free loan. The assistance loan must be paid off when the home is sold or the first mortgage loan is either refinanced or paid off. The TDHCA also has a Veterans Mortgage Credit Program for qualifying borrowers that exempts veterans from the first-time home buying requirement. Under this program, the borrower may

earn a tax credit of up to \$2,000 a year based on 30 percent of the total annual interest paid by the borrower. So if a borrower pays \$5,000 in mortgage interest in a given year, the borrower earns a tax credit of \$1,500 that can be applied toward the borrower's federal income tax liability for that year. The remaining \$3,500 in mortgage interest may be deducted from the borrower's taxable income.

For more information about the TDHCA's assistance programs, visit <http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/homeownership/fthb/>.

Many cities and counties across Texas have additional housing assistance programs that veterans should look into. Ask your lender if he or she is aware of any local assistance programs for which you may qualify.

The VLB must approve these additional benefits before the loan is made. Questions? Contact the VLB's Veterans Hotline at 1.800.252.VETS (8387). ☆



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State Veterans Cemetery Dedication Set for Pearl Harbor Day

Veterans and the general public in the Nueces County area can celebrate two solemn occasions on December 7—Pearl Harbor Day—when the Coastal Bend State Veterans Cemetery is dedicated. What were once 54 acres of open field off Interstate 37 will soon become the final resting place for present-day Texas heroes.

Home to more than 53,000 veterans, the Coastal Bend community has eagerly awaited completion of the cemetery. "This will be a magnificent place of honor for Texas veterans and their spouses," said VLB Chairman Jerry Patterson. "They deserve nothing less."

Flint Hills Resources donated the cemetery site, and the cemetery is funded by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Among its features will be a committal shelter, a visitors center, a computer system for locating specific graves or interments, a paved assembly area for special ceremonies, an avenue of flags, several memorial walkways where future monuments will be placed, a memorial wall to honor those whose remains are not recovered or are buried elsewhere, and a columbarium for interment of cremated remains.

Since taking office in 2003, Patterson has overseen the greatest

expansion of state veterans services since World War II, including the construction of the state's first three Texas State Veterans Cemeteries, which have been built in Killeen, Mission and Abilene.

These cemeteries complement the four VA national cemeteries in Texas, located in San Antonio, Houston, Dallas-Fort Worth and El Paso. There are no known plans for additional national cemeteries in Texas, and approximately 600,000 Texas veterans are 65 or older.

The Texas Veterans Land Board will own the Coastal Bend State Veterans Cemetery and operate it under VA guidelines with continued coordination of VA benefits available to veterans upon death.

For more information, call 1.800.252.VETS or visit our website at www.txasveterans.com. ☆

DEDICATION CEREMONY



COASTAL BEND STATE VETERANS CEMETERY



DECEMBER 7, 2011



9974 IH 37 ACCESS ROAD
CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS

Texas Veterans Cemeteries: A Perfect Home for Retired U.S. Flags

Retiring flags through a dignified flag-burning ceremony is a tradition for organizations like the Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of the USA and the American Legion, but Boy Scout Matt Allmand wants to step it up by holding the ceremony at the Texas State Veterans Cemetery at Abilene.

"What better place to permanently retire flags than at a veterans cemetery," said Allmand, 17, from Abilene.

After prolonged use flags become tattered and can no longer serve as a symbol of the United States. At that point, the flag is destroyed in a dignified manner, preferably by burning.

To fulfill the requirements of his Eagle Scout rank, Allmand seeks to raise funds within his community and donate his labor to construct a permanent flag retirement facility at the Texas State Veterans Cemetery at Abilene. The facility will include a central fire pit surrounded by benches on a concrete platform displaying the Texas Star. A sidewalk will surround the facility to allow the traditional Boy Scout ceremonial program of burning the retired flags.

The Texas Veterans Land Board accepted the proposal earlier this year and once a few details are ironed out, a dedication date for the facility will be set. ☆

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